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Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/43 of 9 December 1997, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", paragraphs 5 to 10 of which read as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "5. *Calls upon* all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, thus creating the necessary conditions for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region;
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> "6. *Encourages* all States of the region to favour the necessary conditions for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, *inter alia*, in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms;
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> "7. *Encourages* the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, which poses a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation;
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> "8. *Invites* all States of the region to address, through various forms of cooperation, problems and threats posed to the region, such as terrorism, international crime and illicit arms transfers, as well as illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which jeopardize the friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society;
>
> "9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region;
>
> "10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region".

2. To date, a reply has been received from one Government and its response is reproduced in section II below. Any replies or notifications received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

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II. Replies received from Governments

Algeria

[Original: French]
[14 September 1998]

1. Algeria fully supports the objectives and the actions envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/43 concerning the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

2. Algeria has always demonstrated an unwavering attachment to the Mediterranean and a constant commitment to the cause of bringing the Mediterranean countries closer together by creating a zone of stability and collective security and promoting the establishment of a space for development and shared prosperity. Against this background, Algeria has participated and been deeply involved in all of the region's own initiatives and, in particular, in the implementation of the Barcelona process, the purpose of which is to establish a framework for renewed partnership.

3. Following the Barcelona Conference in November 1995, which laid the foundation for new relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean, the second Euro-Mediterranean conference, held at Valletta (Malta) in April 1997, facilitated the calm evolution of this process and gave a political impetus to the dynamics of the partnership.

4. The regional political context in which this conference took place confirmed once again the correctness of a global, balanced and multidimensional approach. As coordinator of the group of Arab Mediterranean States, Algeria made its contribution to the maintenance and strengthening of this process, which constitutes a fundamental political achievement.

5. For Algeria, political and security partnership depends on a correlation between security and stability and on the need for economic and social development. The approach adopted involves the gradual, pragmatic implementation of confidence-building measures, taking due account of the changing political and security situation in the region. These measures are intrinsically linked to the just and lasting resolution of conflicts, the peaceful settlement of disputes, concrete and effective measures of disarmament through the accession of all States of the region to the multilateral agreements on the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction (the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction) and the placement of all nuclear installations under the international control of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

6. In addition, Algeria considers that the political and security partnership should be characterized by the riparian States' common political will to face their common challenges together by respecting the principles of international law, particularly those of non-interference in the internal affairs of another State, non-use of force or threat of force, and respect for sovereignty. Any such cooperation can only help to strengthen democracy, consolidate the rule of law in the region and eliminate new forms of threat to peace and security, including disruptive and transnational phenomena, in particular, terrorism.

7. Terrorism, a universal phenomenon which threatens the democratic foundations of States and whose transnational nature has just been confirmed by the attacks on Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, in Africa, during the month of August, requires a policy of prevention and sustained cooperation among all the countries of the Mediterranean. The task, therefore, is to increase and strengthen cooperation against terrorism, which remains the primary challenge to be faced by all the Euro-Mediterranean partners and by the international community.

8. Within the framework of the economic and financial partnership, Algeria has emphasized the need to reduce development disparities between the two shores and has placed particular emphasis, on the one hand, on a just and equitable distribution of the financial flows available to the Mediterranean partners and, on the other, on the need for debt relief and conversion. This requires, to put it plainly, the introduction of new economic relationships and the promotion of a partnership for mutual development. In short, the free-trade area must not constitute an end in itself but a means of attaining the more ambitious goal of a zone of shared prosperity.

9. Where social, cultural and human partnership is concerned, Algeria believes that the establishment of a free-trade area calls for action to address the question of people's mobility, particularly by improving the conditions for travel between the two shores. Lifting restrictions on freedom of travel and settlement will facilitate improved exchanges between people and greater understanding among the coastal societies.

10. Algeria's contribution to the rapprochement of the peoples of the Mediterranean was given concrete form by the convening of the fourth regular session of the Mediterranean Forum in Algiers on 11 and 12 July 1997. The

Algiers meeting marked an important stage in the consolidation and invigoration of this important framework for dialogue and cooperation among Mediterranean countries and confirmed the usefulness of this framework and the commitment of all member countries to the Forum.